

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 01 NOUAKC 00447 171235Z

ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 NEA-10 ISO-00 PM-05 NSC-05 SP-02

SS-15 CIAE-00 INR-10 NSAE-00 DODE-00 /070 W

-----066999 180558Z /15

R 171135Z FEB 78

FM AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 8969

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY RABAT

C O N F I D E N T I A L NOUAKCHOTT 447

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PINT, PGOV, MR, MORG

SUBJ: NEW MAURITANIAN CHIEF-OF-STAFF APPOINTED

REF: A)NOUAKCHOTT 255, B) 77 NOUAKCHOTT 1882

1. LT. COLONEL MOUSTAPHA OULD MUHAMMED SALEK ASSUMED DUTIES AS MAURITANIAN MILITARY CHIEF-OF-STAFF ON FEBRUARY 15 REPLACING M'BARECK OULD BOUNA MOKHTAR WHO, UNTIL JANUAGAE26, WAS BOTH MINISTER OF DEFENSE AND CHEIF OF STAFF. LONG RUMORED REPLACEMENT OF M'BARECK IS NO SURPRISE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE THAT MOUSTAPHA APPOINTMENT PRESAGES ANY CHANGE IN POLICY OR ORGANIZATION. NO OTHER MAJOR CHANGES IN SENIOR LEVELS OF GIRM MILITARY HEAD-QUARTERS STAFF ARE ANTICIPATED.

2. MOUSTAPHA IS SENIOR RANKED LT. COLONEL ON ACTIVE DUTY IN MAURITANIA ARMED FORCES (THERE ARE A TOTAL OF EIGHT -- FOUR OF WHOM APPOINTED DURING SUMMER 1977) AND IS OUTRANKED ONLY BY COLONEL M'BARECK. HE IS FROM THE SOUTHEASTERN REGION OF MAURITANIA AND IS KNOWN AS "EL OUALATI" A TITLE HE RECEIVED FROM HIS FATHER THE GRAND MARABOUT (RELIGIOUS LEADER) OF OUALATA. A CAREER OFFICER WHO GRADUATED FROM SAUMUR MILITARY SCHOOL IN FRANCE, HE HELD
CONFIDENTIAL

CONFIDENTIAL

PAGE 02 NOUAKC 00447 171235Z

CIVILIAN POSITIONS BETWEEN 1972 AND AUGUST 1977. BETWEEN 1974 AND EARLY 1976 HE WAS ROVERNOR OF ATAR RIGION AND FOR THE PREVIOUS TWO YEARS WAS GOVERNOR IN AN EASTERN REGION(BELIEVED TO BE KIFFA). FROM EARLY 1976 UNTIL AUGUST 1977 HE WAS DIRECTRJ-GENERAL OF SONIMEX (MAURITANIAN GOVERNMENT-OWNED COMPANY WHICH HAS MONOPOLY FOR ALL IMPORTATIONOF RICE, SUGAR AND TEA INTO MAURITANIA). AS PART OF COMPLETE REORGANIZATION OF MAURITANIAN

MILITARY COMMAND STRUCTURE AFTER JULY 3, 1977 POLISARIO ATTACK ON NOUAKCHOTT (REF B), HE WAS RECALLED WB ACTIVE DUTY AND APPOINTED COMMANDER OF THE THIRD MILITARY REGION (ATAR). HE IS REPUTED TO BE A COMPETENT STEADY OFFICER. (FYI, MOUSTAPHA ASSIGNMENT TO CIVILIAN POSITION IS NORMAL PATTERN IN ACCORDANCE WITH EARLY 1970'S PRESIDENTIAL DECREE THAT CAREER OFFICERS WHEN THEY REACH SENIOR LT. COL. MILITARY LEVEL, SHOULD BE SHIFTED TO CIVILIAN POSITIONS).

3. RUMORS OF M'BARECK'S REPLACEMENT AS CHIEF OF STAFF HAD BEEN CIRCULATING SINCE LONG BEFORE HE LOST MINISTER OF DEFENSE POSITION ON JANUARY 26, 1978. HE HAS REPORTEDLY TOLD ASSOCIATES THAT HE IS BEING CONSIDERED FOR AMBASSADORIAL POST. HE PREVIOUSLY WAS FIRST COUNSELOR AND CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IN U.S. (1971-72), AMBASSADOR TUNISIA AND TURKEY (1972-73) AND ZAIRE (1973-76). HIS TWO YOUNGER BROTHERS ARE GIRM AMBASSADORS TO IRAN AND SPAIAA. ALTHOUGH M'BARECK'S NAME HAS BEEN MENTIONED IN TALK OF CORRUPTION IN CONNECTION WITH PURCHASES OF MILITARY EQUIPMENT AND THERE HAS BEEN SOME CRITICISM OF HIS LACK OF BATTLEFIELD EXPERIENCE, HE WAS RECOGNIZED BY MANY AS A STRONG CHIEF OF STAFF. IN ANY CASE, HE COMES FROM A POWERFUL MAURITANIAN FAMILY AND WILL PROBABLY REMAIN AN IMPORTANT PUBLIC FIGURE. KRYZA

CONFIDENTIAL

NNN

Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: MILITARY PERSONNEL, PERSONNEL APPOINTMENTS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 17 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978NOUAKC00447
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780075-0478
Format: TEL
From: NOUAKCHOTT
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780241/aaaabitv.tel
Line Count: 85
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 9ff0a2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION AF
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: ONLY
Reference: 78 NOUAKCHOTT 255, 77 NOUAKCHOTT 1882
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 26 apr 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3561784
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: NEW MAURITANIAN CHIEF-OF-STAFF APPOINTED
TAGS: PINT, PGOV, MORG, MR
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odhc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/9ff0a2d4-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014